WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Original) An elevator system, comprising:

an elevator car movable within an elevator hoistway having a plurality of landing doors;

at least one blocking device movable into a blocking position to prevent travel of the car into a temporary working space within the hoistway;

an auxiliary release mechanism mounted on at least one landing door and having an unlocking bit;

an energization circuit operative to prevent actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism during normal operating conditions; and

a sensor arranged so as to detect presence of the blocking device in the blocking position, and in response to the detection provides a maintenance indication signal to the energization circuit which in turn permits actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism.

2. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 1, further comprising an emergency circuit operative to provide an emergency signal to the energization circuit which in turn permits actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism upon detecting an emergency condition.

3. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 1, further comprising a member movable in response to the energization circuit between a first position preventing actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism during normal operating conditions and a second position permitting actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism.

4. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 3, wherein the movable member is configured and arranged to obstruct a keyhole in the first position and permit key access through the keyhole in the second position to actuate the unlocking bit of the auxiliary release mechanism.

5. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 3, wherein the movable member is configured and arranged to slide between the first position where the movable member engages with the unlocking bit of the auxiliary release mechanism and the second position where the movable member engages with the unlocking bit and is additionally coupled to an actuation plate so that rotation of the actuation plate causes concurrent rotation of the unlocking bit to actuate the auxiliary release mechanism.

6. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 3, wherein the energization circuit comprises an electrical device operatively arranged to act on the movable member.

7. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 6, wherein the electrical device is bi-directional so as to move the movable member between the first and second position.

8. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 6, wherein the movable member is biased to one of the positions, and the electrical device when energized, is operative to act on the movable member against the bias to move and retain the movable member in the other of the positions.

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9. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 7, wherein the movable member is biased to and stable in both positions and the energization circuit is operative to provide a current pulse to the electrical device to move the movable member between the bi-stable positions.

10. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 8, wherein the movable member is biased to and stable in both positions and the energization circuit is operative to provide a current pulse to the electrical device to move the movable member between the bi-stable positions.

11. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 7, wherein the movable member is biased by at least one of a spring, a permanent magnet and gravitational force.

12. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 8, wherein the movable member is biased by at least one of a spring, a permanent magnet and gravitational force.

13. (Original) An elevator system according to claim 2, wherein the energization circuit includes a remote control unit, an electrical device and a receiver switch responsive to an unlock signal transmitted from the remote control unit, so that when the unlock signal is transmitted to the receiver switch and the maintenance indication signal or the emergency signal is provided to the energization circuit, the energization circuit actuates the electrical device to automatically unlock the auxiliary release mechanism.

14. (Original) A method for providing access into a hoistway of an elevator system having a car movable within a hoistway, the hoistway having a plurality of floor arrangements, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an auxiliary release mechanism in at least one of the floor arrangements;

providing at least one blocking device movable into a blocking position to prevent travel of the car into a temporary working space within the hoistway;

preventing actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism during normal operating conditions; and

permitting actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism when the blocking device is in the blocking position.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 14, further comprising the step of permitting actuation of the auxiliary release mechanism upon detection of an emergency condition.